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ABSTRACT

U.S. society has come to be a world where offenses are constantly being redefined and thinkers deny that there is any absolute truth. How this has happened, its effects, and what can be done about it are explored. The effects of postmodern relativism are nowhere more evident than in education. Many are working to be sure that American schools show no favor to, and in fact, downgrade, ideas and practices associated with the United States and its Western heritage. The National History Standards developed in 1994 provide the most egregious example to date of encouraging students to take a benign view of other cultures while being hypercritical of the one in which they live. Many commendable efforts to support minorities and women have been subverted into criticism of the culture that has dominated. While education is an area where this is immediately apparent, the same tendencies can be seen in debates over political correctness; ideas growing out of the thinking of Michel Foucault; the consideration of many feminist issues; and trends in the arts, popular psychology (including the recovered memories of presumed child abuse victims), and the press and its view of politics. Some notable exceptions to these trends are highlighted as the basis for eventual change and a reinstatement of regard for objective truth. (SLD)

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